

REMARKS

Please reconsider this application in view of the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of the Claims

Claims 4, 16, and 27-33 are pending in this application. Claims 4, 16, and 27 are independent. The other claims depend, directly or indirectly, from the independent claims.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 4, 16, and 27-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,043,672 (“Sugasawara”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,714,032 (“Reynick”). For the following reasons, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

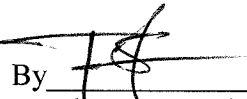
Applicant respectfully notes that the present application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-101867, filed on April 4, 2000. The claim for priority was acknowledged by the Examiner in the Office Action of August 24, 2007. A verified translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-101867 is enclosed herewith. As such, Applicant respectfully asserts that priority is perfected. Thus, Reynick, whose earliest effective filing date is April 25, 2000, does not qualify as prior art and cannot preclude patentability under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 02008/071003).

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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